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AUTHOR Acklen, Leila M.; Nothern, Elbert F.
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ABSTRACT

Two preservice teacher education programs (one standard and one alternative program) were compared to determine whether final ratings of student teachers in the two programs would differ significantly. The standard program involved seven semesters of course work culminating in a semester of student teaching. The alternative program, the Resident Intern Program (RIP), applied theory directly into field experience for an on-the-job approach. Researchers hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the ratings assigned to the students in the RIP program and those in the traditional program. However, results indicated that the ratings did favor participants in the RIP program. (MM)

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Leila M. Acklen
Bert Nothern

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO STUDENT TEACHING OPTIONS

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
MEMPHIS, TN 38152

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In recent years many universities which provide teacher education programs have begun a re-examination and a re-evaluation of these programs, based on a nation-wide need to produce more effective classroom teachers. One of the more innovative changes in teacher education which is now being scrutinized by authorities throughout the country is field-based teaching experiences.

Many authorities today agree that field experiences for the intern-teacher should begin early in his college career. These field experiences should offer an evaluation of the concepts and theories emphasized in the professional courses with respect to their practicality in the real world of teaching. Teacher education should therefore be a longitudinal process of growth in theory and practice rather than a seven-semester sequence of courses capped by an often-traumatic semester of student teaching. More theory should be given to students in their professional sequence. The student should then be allowed to apply these concepts in the public school classroom.

It seems evident that the field-based setting can provide the students with more "real" classroom situations than could be obtained from a standard, campus-based program. The field-based program can also be individualized, dynamic, and adaptive to the strengths and weaknesses of the students and to the unexpected situations which occur in the classroom.

The field-based model for teacher education at the University of Georgia was described by Ashton and Torrance[1] to provide training in six skills which were seen as essential to the teacher. (1) Observation: the ability to perceive what is happening in the classroom. (2) Experimentation: the systematic

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testing of ideas. (3) Communication: successful interaction with children in a classroom situation. (4) Diagnosis: the ability to estimate a student's behavior. (5) Instructional Design: the ability to develop a course of instruction with an understanding of the different types of learning. (6) Evaluation: the ability to design reliable measures of achievement and to assess a student's accomplishment.

In its search for better preservice education for its graduating teachers the College of Education at Memphis State University has through the years developed and offered a variety of student teaching options. These offerings have been planned to provide the new teacher with professional strengths to improve the quality of education in the variety of settings in and around the Memphis area. Rural schools, suburban schools and inter-city schools surround Memphis State University and teacher education graduates are employed in a variety of schools, both public and private. Though it may be recognized that "children are children" and "learning is learning" specialized skills facilitate education in each of these particular settings.

Memphis State University is a large urban institution located in the heart of the Mid-South at Memphis, Tennessee. It has an enrollment of approximately 22,000 students and graduates about 500-600 students per year in teacher education programs. Approximately, 200 of these graduates are elementary teacher education students.

Of the 200 elementary students who graduate each year from Memphis State University approximately two-thirds of them will be trained in the traditional or standard program. This pattern includes seven semesters of course work culminating in a professional semester of student teaching. Elementary students usually student teach for nine hours of university credit in elementary student teaching and for six to nine hours of university credit in a second endorsement area such as special education or early childhood education.

Students entering this program have completed all required methods and content courses and are placed in a variety of elementary schools in the Memphis area for their student teaching experiences.

The Resident Intern Program (RIP), an alternative student teaching program in elementary, early childhood and special education is a two-semester design which applies theory directly into field experience for a practical on-the-job approach to teacher education. This program which accommodates two student modules of twenty each, thirty cooperating teachers and ten university faculty is in its sixth year of operation. Students work for one semester in an Individually Guided Education (IGE) school or in an Open Education School. In a second semester students work in an inner-city, traditional self-contained classroom setting. For the first half of each semester the program provides for knowledge competencies in the content areas of the elementary curriculum. The second half of the semester the knowledge competencies are applied directly into the classroom so that students acquire in an individualized way proficiency in the classroom. One of the major goals of the program is to bring the world of education the world of work more closely together. Interns speak of the program as an experience which is "the making of a teacher" as they apply their professional education directly into the public school for the growth of children.

The heart of the Resident Intern Program is professionally guided experience as students demonstrate at their own rates accruing teaching proficiency under the guidance of university and public school personnel. University professors supervise the implementation of their specific content areas and act as consultants to the classroom teachers and the student teachers. Classroom teachers serve as supervisors. University supervisors responsible for the modules carry out extensive and continuous personal growth seminars where students learn observation, interaction, diagnosis, and evaluation in a humanistic frame of reference.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The results for the study were students who completed student teaching during the fall 1974, spring 1975, fall 1975, and spring 1976 semesters. Fifty students who did student teaching in the RIP program and fifty who did student teaching in the two programs during these four semesters.

Data used consisted of the overall grade point average as of the time of enrollment in student teaching and the ratings assigned to each subject on each of the ten major categories of the Student Teaching Evaluation Form at the conclusion of the student teaching experience. This instrument was developed at Memphis State University and is used by university supervisors and supervising teachers in the evaluation of the performance of students enrolled in all student teaching programs offered by the institution. The major categories are: Professional Qualities, Teaching Personality, Communication Skills, Classroom Control, Lesson Presentations, Subject Field Competence, Planning and Organizing Lessions, Provision for Individual Differences, Involvement of Students in the Thinking/Learning Process, and Evaluation Skills. Rating of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 were assigned with the ratings representing competencies or qualities as below:

1. Excellent achievement and performance
2. Demonstrates strength and skill
3. Good performance
4. Marginal performance
5. Unsatisfactory; does not meet minimum expectations.

The researchers hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between the ratings assigned to the students in the RIP program and those in the traditional program.

RESULTS

The mean grade point average prior to enrolling in Student Teaching for students who completed the RIP program was 3.08, and the mean for those who

completed the traditional program was 2.91. The difference between the means was tested by using the t-test. The difference was not significant at the .05 level as shown in Table 1.

A test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the student teaching program based on the composite ratings assigned by classroom supervisors on all ten major categories. An analysis of variance procedure was used. The results of the overall test indicated there was a significant difference between the student teaching programs at the .01 level. The results are shown in Table 2.

The ratings assigned to the two groups on each of the ten major categories of the Student Teaching Evaluation Form were compared by using the analysis of variance test. The mean ratings received by students who completed the RIP program were significantly different from the ratings received by those who completed the traditional program for all categories at the 1.01 level. The results are shown in Table 3.

A further test was made to determine whether there was a significant difference among the ten major categories based on the ratings assigned to the student teachers. An analysis of variance procedure using a factorial design with the type of student teaching program as one factor, with two levels, and the categories of the Student Teacher Evaluation Form as the second with ten levels was used. A significant F was found at the .01 level. To determine which items differed significantly a multiple range test was conducted. The Student-Newman-Keuls procedure was used. The results are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF THE TWO GROUPS PRIOR TO ENROLLING IN STUDENT TEACHING

GROUP	OVERALL GRADE POINT AVERAGE		t
	MEAN	S.D.	
RIP	3.08	.45	
TRADITIONAL	2.91	.44	1.75*

*Not significant at the .05 level

TABLE 2

OVERALL TEST FOR THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PROGRAMS OF STUDENT TEACHING

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Main Effects	5.18	4	1.30	5.05
Semester	.17	3	.06	.22
Program	4.87	1	4.87	18.99*
2-Way Interactions	.49	3	.16	.63
Semester Program	.49	3	.16	.63
Explained	5.67	7	.81	3.15
Residual	23.61	92	.26	
Total	29.28	99	.29	

*Significant at the .01 level

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF RATINGS ON TEN MAJOR CATEGORIES
OF STUDENT TEACHER EVALUATION FORMS

CATEGORY	MEAN		MEAN SQUARE	F
	TRADITIONAL	RIP		
1	1.42	1.08	2.85	9.95*
2	1.63	1.15	3.33	16.77*
3	1.83	1.22	8.90	23.20*
4	1.97	1.44	7.09	12.60*
5	1.63	1.19	4.81	12.90*
6	1.65	1.27	3.62	10.66*
7	1.63	1.20	4.36	12.03*
8	1.69	1.28	3.79	8.83*
9	1.86	1.34	6.33	16.61*
10	1.67	1.30	3.26	9.18*

*Significant at the .01 level

TABLE 4

A COMPARISON OF RATINGS ASSIGNED TO THE TEN MAJOR CATEGORIES ON THE STUDENT TEACHER EVALUATION FORMS*

	CATEGORY									
CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x			x					x	
3	x			x						
4	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x			x					x	
6	x			x						
7	x			x					x	
8	x			x						
9	x	x		x	x		x			
10	x			x						

* x indicates a significant difference at the .05 level

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated previously, the major purpose of this study was to determine whether supervisors' ratings assigned to student teachers in two programs of student teaching differed significantly. Results indicated that the ratings assigned to students who participated in the Resident Intern Program (RIP) differed significantly from those assigned to students in the traditional program.

Although it is not known with certainty why the difference between the two programs was found, the following might have been contributing factors:

1. In the Resident Intern Program students are involved in a continuous professional growth seminar. Students develop skills in classroom observation, communicative interaction, diagnosis, and evaluation. Classroom control and adaptation of teaching styles are made to the I.G.E., open education, and the self-contained classroom.
2. Students in the Intern Program experience a two-semester sequence in humanistic education. Students receive a great deal of positive reinforcement. Skill levels are raised as students do self-evaluation and develop strategies for personal development.
3. A high level of camaraderie exists in the Program. Students share ideas and spur each other to higher levels of creative teaching as they work together as friends.

Further evidence relative to the comparative effectiveness of the two programs might be obtained by:

1. Determining whether ratings assigned to students in the two programs by university supervisors differ significantly.
2. Analyzing performance evaluations made by principals and/or supervisors after graduates who participated in the two programs have taught for a year or more.

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